

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PUNGAN'S MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY
DERIAN, FEBRUARY 14

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY DERIAN MET FOR OVER AN HOUR WITH ROMANIAN PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR PUNGAN TO REVIEW AREAS OF CONCERN TO US WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN ROMANIA. SUBJECTS DISCUSSED INCLUDED EMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL, MARRIAGE APPROVALS, THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY IN ROMANIA, THE VIENNA LETTER PROBLEM AND THE RAUTA CASE. PUNGAN'S ATTITUDE WAS AT TIMES COMBATIVE, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO RAUTA, BUT PUNGAN ENDED BY PLEDGING THAT THE GOR WILL CONTINUE TO RESOLVE AS MANY HUMANITARIAN MATTERS AS POSSIBLE AND IS WILLING TO DISCUSS EVEN "SPECIAL" PROBLEMS. HIGHLIGHTS FOLLOW, NOT NECESSARILY IN THE ORDER IN WHICH SUBJECTS AROSE DURING CONVERSATION.

2. DERIAN SAID SHE WANTED TO REVIEW WITH PUNGAN SOME HUMAN RIGHTS AREAS WITH WHICH WE NEEDED TO COME TO GRIPS. DIFFI-
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CULTIES WITH, FOR EXAMPLE, EMIGRATION AND MARRIAGE APPROVALS ARE OF CONCERN TO US BOTH BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN SUFFERING THAT THEY CAUSE AND BECAUSE OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS SUCH AS THOSE OF THE JACKSON-VANIK AMENDMENT AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED PRINCIPLES SUCH AS THE PROVISIONS OF THE HELSINKI

FINAL ACT. BEFORE 1977, HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS WERE NOT CENTRAL ISSUES FOR THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION. WE HAVE NOW TAKEN A NEW DIRECTION, AND IT IS ONLY FAIR TO EXPLAIN OUR CONCERNS TO THE GOR AND TO POINT OUT THAT THESE FACTORS DO

AFFECT OUR DECISIONS AND OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. WE THEREFORE NEED A BETTER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THESE ISSUES. DISCUSSION OF THEM IS ALWAYS UNCOMFORTABLE AT FIRST, BUT WE HOPE TO MOVE BEYOND SESSIONS IN WHICH ONE SIDE IS ACCUSATORY AND THE OTHER DEFENSIVE, BUT AFTER WHICH NOTHING HAPPENS. PUNGAN AGREED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE A SUBJECT OF INTERNATIONAL INTEREST AND THAT IT IS WRONG FOR ANY COUNTRY TO PRETEND THAT IT HAS SOLVED ALL ITS PROBLEMS. PUNGAN SAID THAT ONE PROBLEM IS HOW HUMAN RIGHTS ARE DEFINED. ROMANIA AGREES THAT FAMILY REUNIFICATION AND MARRIAGE APPROVALS ARE IMPORTANT MATTERS, BUT THEY DO NOT EXHAUST THE DEFINITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE RIGHT TO WORK, FOR EXAMPLE, IS NOT LESS IMPORTANT FROM THE ROMANIAN PERSPECTIVE.

3. EMIGRATION. DERIAN OUTLINED OUR CONCERN AT THE DECLINING RATE OF EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL AND THE LONG DELAYS FACED BY MOST EMIGRANTS. PUNGAN RESPONDED THAT ROMANIA HAD SOLVED FAMILY REUNIFICATION PROBLEMS EVEN DURING THE COLD WAR AND BEFORE EMIGRATION BECAME A FACTOR IN U.S.-ROMANIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE SAID ROMANIA CONTINUES TO DO SO, AND GAVE THE FOLLOWING FIGURES FOR EMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL. FOR EMIGRATION TO THE U.S.,
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PUNGAN SAID THAT IN 1977 THERE WERE 2,572 APPLICATIONS, OF WHICH 2,014 WERE APPROVED AND ALMOST 2,000 PERSONS DEPARTED. SO FAR IN 1978, THERE HAVE BEEN 136 APPLICATIONS, OF WHICH 115 WERE APPROVED, AND 106 PERSONS HAD ALREADY LEFT ROMANIA. FOR EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL, IN 1977 THERE WERE 1,647 APPLICATIONS, OF WHICH 1,514 WERE APPROVED, AND 1,405 LEFT ROMANIA. IN 1978, THERE HAVE BEEN 126 REQUESTS, AND 82 PERSONS HAVE ALREADY LEFT. PUNGAN MAINTAINED THAT ONLY A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS ARE DENIED PERMISSION, AND ONLY FOR VERY SERIOUS REASONS. PUNGAN SAID THAT IF AN APPLICATION IS DENIED, THAT IS NOT NECESSARILY FINAL. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONING, PUNGAN MAINTAINED THAT AS A MATTER OF LEGAL RIGHT EVERY ROMANIAN CITIZEN CAN OBTAIN THE NECESSARY APPLICATION FORMS FOR EMIGRATION.

4. MARRIAGES. PUNGAN WAS AT HIS LEAST CONVINCING IN ADDRESSING OUR CONCERNS AT DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING APPROVALS FOR MARRIAGES BETWEEN ROMANIAN CITIZENS AND FOREIGNERS. HE BEGAN BY IMPLYING THAT PARENTS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DIFFICULTIES, THEN RETREATED TO THE POSITION THAT THE ROMANIAN STATE HAS THE RIGHT TO PREVENT SOME MARRIAGES.

HE MAINTAINED HOWEVER THAT MOST CASES ARE RESOLVED STEP BY STEP AND THAT THE ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE IS MUCH BETTER THAN THAT OF MANY OTHER COUNTRIES.

5. HUNGARIAN MINORITY. INTRODUCING HER REMARKS BY MENTION-

ING THE LARGE ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES WHICH SEEK TO MAINTAIN A DEGREE OF CULTURAL AND ETHNIC INTEGRITY WHILE BEING GOOD AMERICAN CITIZENS, DERIAN REFERRED TO RECENT PUBLIC DISCUSSION IN THE U.S. OF THE STATUS OF THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY IN ROMANIA. ONE EXAMPLE WAS PUBLICATION OF THE KIRALY LETTER IN THE NEW YORK TIMES. DERIAN MADE CLEAR THAT THE U.S. HAS NO RPT NO INTEREST IN ENCOURAGING ROMANIAN HUNGARIANS TO FORM A SEPARATE NATION OR JOIN SOME OTHER NATION. WE DO, HOWEVER, SYMPATHIZE WITH
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THEIR DESIRE TO PRESERVE THEIR OWN CULTURE WHILE BEING GOOD ROMANIAN CITIZENS. PUNGAN COUNTERED BY STATING THAT ROMANIA IS PROUD OF ITS MINORITY POLICY, WHICH IS BASED ON 2,000 YEARS OF EXPERIENCING THE DIFFICULTIES OF LIVING UNDER THE DOMINATION OF OTHERS. PUNGAN SAID ROMANIA APPROACHES THESE ISSUES WITH GREAT SENSITIVITY AND HE CITED STATISTICS TO SHOW THAT ROMANIAN HUNGARIANS ENJOY AN OPPORTUNITY BOTH TO PRESERVE THEIR OWN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE AND TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ROMANIAN NATION. PUNGAN SAID THAT THE HUNGARIAN MINORITY, WHICH MAKES UP 8.5 PERCENT OF ROMANIA'S POPULATION, ACCOUNTS FOR 7.7 PERCENT OF COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP, 7.5 PERCENT OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP, AND 8.0 PERCENT OF THE GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP; HUNGARIAN WOMEN ACCOUNT FOR 19.0 PERCENT OF THE LEADERSHIP. THERE ARE 1,440 HUNGARIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND 112 SECONDARY SCHOOLS. THE HUNGARIAN COMMUNITY IS SERVED BY 32 PUBLICATIONS IN THE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE, 9 CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC MAGAZINES, 10 THEATERS, AND 229 CLASSICAL OR FOLK MUSIC GROUPS. DERIAN SAID THAT AMERICAN HUNGARIANS IN CLEVELAND, WHICH SHE HAD VISITED SHORTLY BEFORE THE RETURN OF THE CROWN TO HUNGARY, WOULD PROBABLY HAVE DIFFERENT FIGURES, FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS TEACHING IN THE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE. SHE SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO HAVE MORE PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF SUCH FACT SO AS TO CREATE A BALANCED PICTURE. PUNGAN RESPONDED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD ROMANIANS IN THE UNITED STATES COULD STUDY IN ROMANIAN ONLY IN SPECIAL CHURCH SCHOOLS, AND HE ASKED WHETHER SUCH A SITUATION COULD BE CONSIDERED SATISFACTORY.

6. VIENNA LETTER. DERIAN ASKED WHY THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT WAS APPARENTLY NO LONGER PERMITTING BEARERS OF THE VIENNA LETTER TO DEPART ROMANIA. WHEN PUNGAN INDICATED HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE SUBJECT, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS
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EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS A DOCUMENT WHICH PERMITTED ROMANIANS WHO ARE NOT QUALIFIED FOR DIRECT ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES TO PROCEED TO VIENNA AND THEN EVENTUALLY TO THE U.S.

UNTIL RECENTLY, ROMANIA HAD AGREED TO THIS SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION. PUNGAN MAINTAINED THAT IF SUCH PERSONS WERE NOT QUALIFIED FOR ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES, THEY SHOULD NOT BE A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ROMANIA. DERIAN REPLIED THAT WE ARE CONCERNED AT THE IMMEDIATE HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM CAUSED BY THE INABILITY OF SUCH PERSONS TO DEPART, AND THAT WE ARE SEEKING ROMANIAN UNDERSTANDING OF SUCH CONCERNS BECAUSE THEY AFFECT U.S. PUBLIC POLICY AND ATTITUDES.

7. RAUTA CASE. WHEN THE LONGSTANDING SEPARATION OF THE RAUTA FAMILY WAS FIRST RAISED, PUNGAN RESPONDED THAT RAUTA IS A TRAITOR AND ASKED THAT HE NOT BE MENTIONED AGAIN IN THE DISCUSSION. WHEN PUNGAN CONTINUED TO REFUSE TO DISCUSS THE MATTER, DERIAN SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS WE CANNOT AVOID IT BEING DISCUSSED AT THE TIME OF PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU'S VISIT. PUNGAN RAISED THE MATTER HIMSELF LATER IN THE CONVERSATION BY ASKING DERIAN'S OPINION OF RAUTA'S ACTION. DERIAN RESPONDED THAT THE POINT AT ISSUE IS THE SEPARATION OF THE FAMILY. AFTER HIS DECISION TO REMAIN HERE, RAUTA HAD BEHAVED CIRCUMSPECTLY AND HAD NOT TRIED TO EMBARRASS THE GOR, NOR COULD WE SEE HOW HIS ACTION DAMAGED U.S.-ROMANIAN RELATIONS. WHEN PUNGAN ASKED WHAT WE WOULD DO IN A CASE SUCH AS THAT OF RAUTA, HE WAS TOLD THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT HOLD A FAMILY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF ITS MEMBERS. PUNGAN SAID THAT THE GOR HAS MADE CLEAR ITS POSITION ON RAUTA. HE SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO LOOK AGAIN AT THE SITUATION OF THE WIFE AND CHILD. HE ASKED THAT WE NOT GENERALIZE THE RAUTA CASE. FAMILY REUNIFICATION IS A PERMANENT ASPECT OF ROMANIAN POLICY AND THE GOR WILL CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR SOLUTIONS IN A HUMANITARIAN WAY.
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8. AFTER SOME FURTHER DISCUSSION, PUNGAN CLOSED BY SAYING THAT THE CONVERSATION HAD DEMONSTRATED HOW THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN ROMANIA AND THE UNITED STATES PERMIT BOTH SIDES TO SAY EXACTLY WHAT THEY THINK. PUNGAN SAID THAT WE CAN BE SURE THAT THE GOR WILL CONTINUE TO SOLVE AS MANY HUMANITARIAN MATTERS AS POSSIBLE AS IT HAS DONE BEFORE RECEIVING MFN. IF THERE ARE SOME CASES WITH VERY SPECIAL PROBLEMS, EVEN THESE CAN BE DISCUSSED. HE SAID HE HAD INVITED AMBASSADOR AGGREY TO COME TO HIM WITH CASES WHICH CANNOT APPROPRIATELY BE DISCUSSED IN NORMAL CHANNELS. PUNGAN SAID THERE WILL ALWAYS BE PROBLEMS TO BE DISCUSSED, AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO RESPECT EACH OTHER'S LEGAL REGULATIONS AS WELL AS THE PRIDE AND SENSIBILITIES OF THE OTHER

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